

R E P O R T
OF
The Society of Antiquaries
OF
NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE.

M.DCCC.LXXVIII.

THE Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle-upon-Tyne has run its course, during the fifty-sixth year of its existence, in its ordinary quiet and useful manner. Its meetings have been held every month, without intermission, at which the subjects of antiquarian interest occurring in the district have been discussed. No grand discovery has been made during the year like that of the Well of Coventina, at Procolitia, which was referred to in the last report, but several important additions have been made to our knowledge by the spade of the excavator. The excavations at Binchester have been watched with interest, and the explorations of Newminster Abbey have been reported upon from time to time. The splendid monumental stones of the Roman era, which have been disinterred at South Shields and at Carlisle, have furnished much interesting subject of discussion. Mr. Blair has occasionally exhibited the intaglios and other works of art which still continue to be found at the Lawe, South Shields; and, at the October meeting, Mr. Robinson exhibited an important collection of stone implements formed by him during a recent tour in the United States.

At the meeting in March last, Messrs. Greenwell, Robinson, and Blair were appointed a committee to re-arrange the Society's coins. This work they have in part accomplished, and have, in addition, paid

some attention to the miscellaneous collection of antiquities, especially the Ancient British, in possession of the Society, attaching to them labels indicating the localities where they were found.

It is some years since a catalogue was prepared of the Roman inscribed and sculptured stones in the museum. It is exceedingly desirable that the catalogue of the Society's possessions were extended, so as to include the Ancient British urns and stone and bronze implements, as well as the Saxon remains and mediæval objects. Perhaps the committee already named would undertake the important and interesting but somewhat laborious task.

The attention of the Society was called at its last annual meeting to the state of the fund provided for the building of a new museum. The Council have now to report that Mr. Dees and Mr. Dodd have been added to the surviving trustees of the fund, and that the money has been invested in government stock to the amount of £879 10s.; the interest of which, as the dividends become due, will be duly added to the capital in future.

It may be that the time is not far off when the money will be wanted for the purpose for which it was originally subscribed. It is perhaps not Utopian to suppose that a grand building, befitting the important town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, may yet be reared which shall contain a gallery of statuary and pictures, an antiquarian museum, a museum of such objects of interest as may from time to time be brought to it from all parts of the world by the shipping frequenting our port, a library of general reference, and perhaps also a school of art.

According to previous arrangements several members of the Society took an excursion to Chesters on the 27th of June last. The newly-excavated turret on the Wall, at Brunten, was examined; the forum in the station of Cilurnum was surveyed with care; and the Well of Coventina, at Procolitia, and the objects which had been found in it, were carefully scrutinized. The party were kindly entertained at luncheon by the hospitable owner of Chesters.

Should the Society think fit to take an excursion this year, Bishop Auckland might be suggested as a fitting place to be visited, the excavations which are being conducted in the neighbouring station of Binchester, by Mr. Proud, being well worthy of attention.

On the 1st October last the Society held a special meeting, at which a memorial was unanimously adopted for presentation to the Corporation of Newcastle, praying for "the preservation of the evidences of the history of Newcastle, and especially the ancient Carliol Tower and the other remaining towers and relics of the Wall." This memorial, which was in due course presented, was not in the first instance successful, but there is reason to hope that the object for which it was drawn up may yet be obtained, and one of the ancient landmarks of the town preserved. But even should the Carliol Tower be removed, and the work of our forefathers be for ever destroyed, the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle-upon-Tyne may be congratulated that it has not existed in vain. A few years ago, this tower, had it pleased the authorities, would have been removed, as other more important structures have been, without remonstrance; but, through the influence of this Society and other agencies, the community has been so thoroughly instructed in the real value attaching to those memorials of the past, which teach us more impressively and more vividly than the lettered page can do, the struggles, the triumphs, the modes of thought and feeling of our forefathers, that as soon as it was known that this tower was threatened with destruction an amount of feeling and energetic action on the part of the community was educed which could not have been anticipated, and which bodes well for the future.

On another subject the Society may perhaps be congratulated. Twenty years ago its noble Patron, the fourth Duke of Northumberland, suggested that an effort should be made to collect and preserve the melodies and ballads of the border land, which were fast falling into oblivion. A Melodies Committee was formed, of which the late Mr. Kell and the late Mr. White were conspicuous members. Their labours are now bearing fruit, for considerable attention has of late been paid to the simple but stirring and peculiar music of the ancient inhabitants of Northumbria; and one of the newspapers of the district, the "Newcastle Courant," has begun to publish a well-edited series of the airs which from time immemorial have lived in the memories and imaginations of successive generations, but which have not as yet assumed a visible shape. Should the effort be encouraged as it ought to be, the musical genius of our ancestry will be preserved in a permanent form.

The first part of a new volume of the "Archæologia Æliana" now lies upon the table. It contains several papers of great importance, more than one of which have been educed by the important discoveries recently made at Procolitia. The whole of the woodcuts and plates, illustrative of Mr. Clayton's papers upon "Coventina," have been contributed by that gentleman.

Should the lapidarian discoveries of the North of England go on at the rate which they have done since the completion of the "Lapidarium Septentrionale" in 1875, the time may not be far distant when it would be well to undertake a new edition of that work, or an Appendix to it.

Several important additions to the Library have been made by purchase during the year, and, as in former years, some very valuable books have been presented to the Society by Sir Walter C. Trevelyan, Bart., one of your Vice-Presidents.

Not long after our last anniversary meeting our noble President was gathered to his fathers. The late Earl of Ravensworth was a ripe scholar, especially excelling in a knowledge of Greek and Latin classics. He had a keen appreciation of the fine arts, and was a lover of archæological research. He was ever ready to lend his aid to this Society, and was an occasional contributor to its publications. He frequently took the chair at its annual meetings, and always presided with grace and dignity. The important duty of electing a successor to his Lordship devolves upon the Society to day.

OFFICERS, M.DCCC.LXXIX.

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HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF NORTHUMBERLAND.

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		Cr.		
1879.			£	s. d.
	By paid J. Gibson, one year	...	46	16 0
	„ Subscription to Newminster Excavations	...	10	0 0
	„ J. Ventress	...	3	0 0
	„ Stevenson and Dryden, Printing	...	1	18 0
	„ Asher and Co.	...	4	5 0
	„ Wm. Dodd, Account	...	11	1 9
	„ Rent of Castle	...	0	2 6
	„ Insurance	...	0	7 6
	„ Surtees' Society	...	1	1 3
	„ Frost, Wire Guards	...	2	9 6
	„ Pape, for Punches	...	1	2 6
	„ Coals and Firewood	...	1	17 0
	„ Postage and Carriage	...	1	13 7
	„ Commission on Subscriptions	...	4	16 6
	„ Sundries	...	0	5 4
	„ Balance	...	509	15 4
			£600 11 9	

January 27th, 1879.

*Examined and found correct, after comparing
vouchers with statements.*

JOHN PHILIPSON.
SHERITON HOLME.

